

# HOUSING MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

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## HOUSING AND RECREATION

### BIRMINGHAM

Endorsing a statement by a member of the New York City Housing Authority in the November 4 issue of the BULLETIN to the effect that housing projects should not undertake recreation work, Mr. J. C. deHoll, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District, writes:

"This Authority entered into an agreement with the City of Birmingham whereby the Park & Recreation Board of the City will operate the Community House and the playgrounds in our PWA project, on the same basis that it operates all other community houses and playgrounds in the City. That places these functions in experienced hands and where they rightfully belong."

### PHILADELPHIA

Favorable press attention has been given both Hill Creek Homes and Carl Mackley Houses on the basis of their very extensive recreational and community activities programs. A recent newspaper feature story uses as its theme a statement of Dr. C.-E.A. Winslow before the Council of Social Agencies that something akin to American village life is being reawakened in the various current housing projects and that these projects are "the one definite factor designed today to uphold the family while other factors, like movies, tend to decentralize family life."

WPA instructors carry on the bulk of the programs at the two Philadelphia projects mentioned above. The tenants themselves have initiated the programs, which include, according to "Mackley News," all those activities which will "spread friendliness and neighborliness, safeguard and improve health, help solve problems of youth, help eliminate unemployment, improve recreational and amusement facilities."

### NEW YORK CITY

Use of recreation rooms in Knickerbocker Village for political meetings and for discussions of a controversial nature was prohibited recently by the management on the grounds that such meetings and discussions were responsible for heavy tenant turnover. However, after two meetings with the Village Tenants Association, the management withdrew the ban. The Civil Liberties Committee of the Tenants Association held that tenant turnover was due not to controversial meetings in the public rooms but to dirty halls, unsightly elevators, poor painting policy, uninsulated stoves, soot, and lack of community facilities. The Committee agreed with the management that political rallies such as the one which had precipitated the ban, at which free beer was served and which broke up with noise and confusion, were to be restricted in the future and that they would cooperate with the management in effecting general Village improvement.

The whole question caused much comment in the Village, and, before favorable action was taken by the management, it was proposed that the matter be submitted to the State Superintendent of Housing for ruling. There has been considerable controversy at Hillside Homes, another New York City Project under supervision of the state, because the management has refused use of community facilities to a recently created minority group known as the Tenants' Association. This new group apparently feels that the established Hillside Community Council is too much of a "company union."

The point involved is whether the management companies of these projects are in the position of common law landlords who can grant the right of use of their auditoriums as they see fit or whether, as creatures of state enabling legislation which requires provision of recreational facilities, they should make these facilities more readily available to all tenant groups.

THE BULLETIN WANTS NEWS, IDEAS, REPORTS AND OTHER MATERIAL ON MANAGEMENT  
PLEASE SEND TWO COPIES: ONE TO NAHO, ONE TO THE BULLETIN'S EDITORIAL OFFICE



### A NEW PUBLICATION

The United States Housing Authority has just published Housing and Recreation, a 40 page, illustrated booklet dealing with the design of individual recreational features and the general relationship of recreational spaces to the site plan of a large-scale housing development. Copies are available from USHA.

### Red Hook Program

The Red Hook community building serving the New York City Housing Authority's 2545-family Red Hook Houses project will be opened on January 1.

The recreation program, which is expected to be directed by the Red Hook Community Association, will be developed partly with the aid of a \$5000 grant recently made by the Carnegie Corporation through the American Association for Adult Education. Miss Catherine Lansing of the staff of the New York City Housing Authority, who has been responsible for much of the initial planning of the program, will be one of the board of governors of the Red Hook Community Association. In direct charge of activities will be Mr. Robert W. Crawford, for four years director of recreation at the town of Hastings-On-Hudson.

Through a program of weekly dances, motion pictures, games, musical group training, and cooking demonstrations the interests of entire families rather than merely individuals will be developed.

The two-story community building contains a gymnasium and assembly hall, kitchen, club room, five craft and social rooms, a workshop, and a large play room.

### CINCINNATI

A winter schedule of adult education classes is under way at Greenhills with a teaching staff of 12, covering shorthand and typing, industrial arts, the modern family and the home, sketching, agriculture, gymnasium, English usage, first aid, play production, economics, clothing, cooperative education.

### DETROIT TENANT INCOMES

In January the Detroit Housing Commission plans to make its first review of tenant incomes under the USHA program at both Parkside and Brewster Homes. Tenants will be canvassed to determine whether or not any

of them must be moved out as a result of income increases, change in family status, etc. Preliminary to this move, however, the Detroit Commission has just completed a study of families now living in Detroit in substandard housing who are estimated to be eligible for admission to low-rent housing projects. Eligibility is based on the following maximum income limits adopted in a resolution by the Commission on November 6, 1939.

### Number of Members

<u>in Family</u>	<u>Income Limit</u>
2 persons	\$ 898
3 persons	1019
4 persons	1140
5 persons	1250
6 persons	1360
7 persons	1395

In the table below the 30,000 families living in substandard housing and having incomes that would qualify them for residence in public housing developments are classified as to income and family size.

	NUMBER OF PERSONS IN FAMILY							
	White Race							Total
	2	3	4	5	6	7		Families
Under \$400	1858	1045	589	320	276	141		4229
400 - 599	865	647	455	186	135	64		2352
600 - 799	1769	1474	884	654	276	186		5243
800 - 999	603	955	859	487	308	128		3340
1000- 1199		119	678	519	295	173		1784
1200- 1399				88	200	125		413
Totals	5095	4240	3465	2254	1490	817		17361
Negro Race								
Under \$400	2177	946	509	245	192	139		4208
400 - 599	860	351	212	86	60	26		1595
600 - 799	2335	1105	642	503	238	198		5021
800 - 999	402	450	238	179	86	79		1434
1000- 1199		55	190	172	66	86		569
1200- 1399				30	74	65		169
Totals	5774	2907	1791	1215	716	593		12996

### IDEAS

**PARKING . . .** In Minneapolis one morning all car owning tenants of Sumner Field rose to discover themselves fined \$1.00 each for parking on city streets throughout the night. Selecting a committee from among themselves they took the matter up at once with one of the city aldermen and with the police department. As a result, certain city blocks were set aside for all night diagonal parking for project cars, with police and car patrolling, and with fair warning that parking at any other point would mean tagging and fines.

**UTILITIES . . . .** The electric company in a large city having a PWA Housing Division project estimates that 40 per cent of the tenants



who moved into the project allowed to go unpaid the electric bills incurred at their previous place of residence. There is evidence that the same condition existed in regard to gas bills.

Since the tenants in the project obtain most gas and electricity through master meters of the housing project, it is impossible for the utility company to enforce collection by the usual method of turning off service. Furthermore, the non-payment of bills by the tenant is likely to make difficult the maintenance of satisfactory relations between the local housing authority and the utility company. Such a relationship is particularly important where the local authority is a preferred customer of the utility company and where it is expecting to negotiate for further contracts on new housing developments.

The moral of the story seems to be to require evidence of paid utility bills as a part of tenant selection procedure.

**MAINTENANCE** . . In order to stimulate interest on the part of children in better care of project property, Franklin Thorne, Manager of Langston Terrace, Washington, conducted a slogan contest and had the winning slogans placed on self-closing receptable cans standing in various parts of the project, as: a can carrying the legend "I AM HERE TO BE USED" -- John Johns (the author) -- or "I LIKE TO EAT DIRT" -- John Smith. Mr. Thorne says that children enjoy seeing their names printed on the cans and go out of their way to use them.

## CONFERENCES

Two days of each of the next four five-day NAHO sponsored Regional Conferences will be devoted exclusively to housing management. These Conferences are designed to serve active housing officials by facilitating first-hand exchange of information and experience. The dates and the USHA regions that are to be served by each Conference are as follows: Region I, January 8-12, Boston; Region II, January 15-19, Philadelphia; Region V, January 22-26, Detroit; Region VII, February 5-9, San Francisco. The preliminary program for the Region I meeting has already been mailed out. Others will be distributed shortly to all NAHO members, housing managers, and local authority executives in the Regions named.

The first Annual Meeting of the Managers' Division of NAHO will be held in conjunction with the 1940 Meeting of the Association now planned for some time in April in Pittsburgh.

## FIELD NOTES

NAHO feels that there can be no more valuable commentary on project layout and management than that offered by one project manager on the efforts of another. For that reason we quote below from the report of Mr. O. L. Ledbetter, management aide, Memphis, on a recent visit through Techwood Homes, Atlanta:

### Sorrows

"THE third floor apartments have been most difficult to rent and have suffered a constant turnover, due to aged persons, invalids, small children and infants, whose physical needs required that they be on ground floors. -- GARAGES renting for \$3.00 a month have been a 'headache,' hard to rent, not needed. -- THE project has no play area large enough for ball and games of like nature. Thus, upkeep of grounds and shrubs has been an expensive proposition, as well as a trying one to tenants, their children and management. -- SOME shrubs endangered by play activities of children were transplanted to other locations. -- INDOOR social space is limited and activities have been likewise. Soundproofing of one basement space had no appreciable effect with regard to reduction of noise. -- COMMUNITY laundries with wash tubs and drying lines in same room have been unsatisfactory. -- HALLS and stairs are swept only twice weekly, hence tenants must have cleanly habits, or else entrances to their apartments will be most unsightly. -- CASEIN paint is used, but not liked.

### Joys

"PARK benches have been anchored on some lawns facing community walks thus allowing residents an opportunity to get out of their apartments in hot weather, as well as providing sitting out space for mothers with children. -- THE City School System furnished equipment and supervision for a Kindergarten to meet in a social room. -- TILE walls in entrances need only occasional cleaning. -- TENANT maintenance is encouraged in every manner. -- A COMPOUND for extermination purposes is furnished free to all tenants who will use same. -- SINCE the project has a busy traffic artery running through its center, especially made portable traffic signs are placed in streets at intersections while children are going to and from school. -- THERE are 41 employees on the project, which consists of 604 units. -- ALL tenants are taken from the lowest income group. Seasonal turnover is held to a minimum by not permitting former tenants to return until all others on waiting list are cared for."



## FIRSTS

## AUSTIN

First grease spots . . . first broken window . . . first community night . . . first baby!

Thus initiated, Austin's Mexican federal housing project, Santa Rita, reported as successful its first three months of operation. Of the grease spots, the Austin American says: "The first grease spots have shown up on the cement kitchen floors. (And this, by the way, is a source of great sorrow to the housewives, who have brought their troubles to the director. 'We scrub and we scrub, and they won't come off!' they moan. And, indeed, they won't. So the floors will probably be finished so that the grease spots can be polished away.)"

Of the broken window: "The first window pane has been broken--much to the honest grief of the culprit who immediately came to the director and wanted to know how much it would cost to have it replaced as he wanted to pay for the new pane!"

Of the community night: "Latin fondness of gay music and dancing has shown itself, the people in the project themselves organizing their first community night. Guitars, songs, and dances featured this celebration, which proved to be worthy of repetition . . ." and they set the date for a second community night.

Of the baby: "Pete Lopez, Jr. . . believed to be the first child born in a federal (The Editors assume USHA-financed) housing unit in the United States.

## TOLEDO

On Thanksgiving Eve the first family moved into the Charles Weiler Homes (father, mother, Rita, Theresa, Mary, and Charles, Jr.). They left their old three-room house, with a vacant, floorless, empty storefront and with no yard, no gas, no bathtub, with a leaking roof and falling plaster (\$12.00 a month, no utilities, no heat) and they came to five new rooms, a bath, plenty of heat and light, all the modern conveniences of kitchen and utilities (\$23.50 a month, including utilities).

This and the Austin story above are typical newspaper feature article material. They were given prominent display with good pictures and captions in the local press. Such human interest angles are excellent public relations media.

## FOR 1940

Yes, here it is. NAHO wishes you a happy housing year for 1940!

The next twelve months should be important ones for the new profession of public housing management. With one hundred and twenty-five USHA projects under construction at the present time, it is apparent that the coming year will see the demand for management personnel assume record proportions. NAHO, and particularly the Managers' Division, hope that they will be able to lead in the transition from theory to practice, much of which still lies before us.

The keynote sounded by Nathan Straus, Administrator of USHA, in his message to the New York University Management Training Institute last summer is even more timely now, and constitutes a fitting theme for the new year.

" . . . The success of the public housing program is in the hands of the housing managers. But there is even more than this at stake. I am firmly convinced that the development of a rich community life in our housing projects can lead the way toward a higher form of community life outside of our projects. Yes, we in the public housing movement are creating a new design for living. We are establishing a pattern that private builders and private management agencies will inevitably follow. We are blazing the way not only toward an America without slums, but toward an America in which man shall know his neighbor and join with his neighbor in play and recreation and in the democratic solution of mutual problems. If properly managed, our projects will become dress rehearsals for the World of Tomorrow. They should help us make that world one in which life is fuller, more joyous and more creative. If properly managed, they will become fortresses of democracy. They will help us strengthen the will of the people to plot their own destiny and resist the infiltration of totalitarian influences."

## DISTRIBUTION POLICY ON BULLETIN

The HOUSING MANAGEMENT BULLETIN is distributed to members of NAHO who have signified their desire to receive it for a trial period. Copies are available to non-members only by purchase of individual issues at 15¢ each. It is anticipated that the BULLETIN will become shortly the official organ of the Housing Management Division of NAHO, now being organized.







